

in this legislation. We had hoped that would be an amendment. Again, it doesn't look as if we are going to have an opportunity to present this amendment. I don't think that is the Senate at its best.

I will vote for cloture on a bill that I actually think is a good piece of legislation but not without the opportunity for us to consider some of these amendments. They could have time limits where we could try to improve this bill. We can make sure this is good for the business community and good for the people in our country who want to have a chance to be a part of this new economy, as well as bringing in skilled workers from other countries. I think we could do all of it. It could be a win-win-win.

The Senate is at its best when we can bring these amendments to the floor and therefore have an opportunity to represent people in our States and be legislators. But when we are shut down and closed out, then I think Senators have every right to say we can't support this. That is certainly going to be my position.

I yield the floor.

#### HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION PROVISIONS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I note the presence of Senator KENNEDY on the floor. I want to say to Senator KENNEDY and to Senator FRIST—who is not on the floor, but I have seen him personally—that I thank both of them for their marvelous efforts in having included in the health care bill, which was recently reported out, SAMSHA, and about five or six provisions contained in a Domenici-Kennedy bill regarding the needs of those in our country who have serious impairment from mental illness.

We did not expect to get those accomplished this year. We thank them for it. We know that we will have to work together in the future to get them funded. But when we present them to the appropriators, they will understand how important they are.

I thank the Senator.

#### ENERGY POLICY

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I spoke yesterday for a bit and in the Energy Committee today for a bit about energy policy. I guess I believe so strongly about this issue that I want to speak again perhaps from a little different vantage point.

I would like to talk today about the "invisible priority" that has existed in the United States for practically the last 8 years. The "invisible priority" has been the supply of reliable affordable energy for the American people.

Let me say unequivocally that we have no energy policy because the Interior Department, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Energy Department all have ideological priorities that leave the American consumer of energy out in the cold.

Making sure that Americans have a supply of reliable and affordable energy, and taking actions to move us in that direction, is the "invisible priority." And that is giving the administration the benefit of the doubt.

"Not my job" is the response that the Interior Department of the United States gives to the energy crisis and to America's ever-growing dependence upon foreign oil and, yes, I might say ever-growing dependence upon natural gas. The other alternatives, such as coal, nuclear, or other—"not my job."

It is also the response that the Environmental Protection Agency gives when it takes actions, promulgates rules, and regulations. Their overall record suggests—let me repeat—"not my job," says the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Interior Department, making drilling for oil and natural gas as difficult as possible, says, "Don't bother us."

"It is not my job," says the Department of Interior. The Environmental Protection Agency's job is to get a good environmental policy based on sound science and be the enemy of an ideologically pure environmental policy at the expense of providing energy that we need.

My last observation: In summary, the "Energy Department" is an oxymoron. It is anti-nuclear but pro-windmills. I know many Americans ask: what is the Senator talking about? Nuclear power is 20 percent of America's electricity. At least it was about 6 months ago. We have an Energy Department for this great land with the greatest technology people, scientists and engineers, that is pro-windmills and anti-nuclear.

I will say, parenthetically, as the chairman of the Energy and Water Subcommittee on Appropriations, the last 3 years we put in a tiny bit of money for nuclear energy research and have signed it into law as part of the entire appropriation, and we do have a tiny piece of money to look into the future in terms of nuclear power. It is no longer nothing going on, but it is a little bit.

Boy, do we produce windmills in the United States. The Department of Energy likes renewables. All of us like them. The question is, How will they relieve the United States from the problem we have today? I guess even this administration and even the Vice President, who is running for President, says maybe we have a crisis. Of course we have a crisis. The Federal Government spent \$102 million on solar energy, \$33 million on wind, but only \$36.5 million on nuclear research, which obviously is the cleanest of any approach to producing large quantities of electricity.

Sooner or later, even though we have been kept from doing this by a small vocal minority, even America will look back to its early days of scientific prowess in this area as we wonder how France is doing it with 87 percent of their energy produced by nuclear powerplants.

With all we hear about nuclear power from those opposed, who wouldn't concede that France exists with 87 percent or 85 percent of its energy coming from nuclear powerplants? They do, and their atmosphere is clean. Their ambient air is demonstrably the best of all developed countries because it produces no pollution.

We have an administration that, so long as we had cheap oil, said everything was OK, and we couldn't even seek a place to put the residue from our nuclear powerplants, the waste product. We couldn't even find a place to put it. We got vetoes and objections from the administration. Yet there are countries such as France, Japan, and others that have no difficulty with this problem; it is not a major problem to store spent fuel.

Let me move on to wind versus nuclear. Nuclear produced 200 times more electricity than wind and 2,000 times more than solar. As I indicated, solar research gets three times more funding than nuclear research and development.

The wind towers—we have seen them by the thousands in parts of California and other States, awfully strange looking things. They are not the old windmills that used to grace the western prairie. They have only two prongs. They look strange.

We are finding wind towers kill birds, based on current bird kill rates. Replacing the electric market with wind would kill 4.4 million birds. I am sure nobody expects either of those to happen. However, more eagles were killed in California wind farms than were killed in the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

The Energy Department calls wind a renewable energy policy, and the Sierra Club calls wind towers the Cuisinart of the air.

I will discuss the SPR selloff. For almost 8 years, energy has been the "invisible priority" for the U.S. Government led by Bill Clinton and the current Vice President.

Incidentally, the Vice President, who is running for President, had much to do with this "invisible priority;" he was the administration's gatekeeper on almost all matters that dealt with the Environmental Protection Agency and almost all matters that dealt with the Department of the Interior in terms of the production of energy on public land.

Let me talk about the SPR selloff for a minute. Treasury Secretary Summers warned President Clinton that the administration's proposal—now decision—to drive down energy prices by opening the energy reserve would be "a major and substantial policy mistake." He wrote the President, and Chairman